

SNAP-Ed Toolkit

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Pick a better snack™

Iowa Department of Public Health

Overview

Pick a better snack™ is a direct education and social marketing intervention that aims to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and promote daily physical activity among children. The program is designed to influence children's preference for fruits and vegetables and the snacks they request at home. Nutrition educators deliver monthly lessons and fruit and vegetable tastings during the school day to kindergarten through third grade classes. Family newsletters and health-themed bingo cards are sent home to engage parents. Two complimentary community-based social marketing campaigns, Pick a better snack and Play Your Way, further support healthy eating and physical activity behavior change. **Target Behavior:** Healthy Eating, Physical Activity **Intervention Type:** Direct Education, Social Marketing

Intervention Reach and Adoption

Pick a better snack™ targets students in grades K-3 and their families. It was originally developed to reach students and families in Iowa schools, but could be extended to both public and private schools in other states. Pick a better snack™ could also be expanded to out of school sites in both rural and urban areas, such as summer camps or other after school programs. Many of the lessons connect well with farm to school programs. **Setting:** School, Community **Age:** Elementary School, Parents/Mothers/Fathers **Race/Ethnicity:** All

Intervention Components

The primary component of the Pick a better snack™ program is a monthly nutrition education lesson delivered by a health educator. Each lesson introduces students to a new fruit or vegetable. The students learn about the fruit or vegetable in an interactive, age-appropriate manner as well as engage in a classroom physical activity break. Finally, students sample the produce and receive a sticker to wear home. Students also take home bingo cards and family newsletters. Fruit and vegetable fact sheets are available for educators or classroom teachers. The Pick a better snack™ campaign encourages children to “Fuel Your Fun” with fruits and vegetables, while the *Play Your Way One Hour a Day* campaign energizes students to be active a minimum of sixty minutes every day. Marketing materials include bookmarks, in-store signage, school posters, billboards, web banners, videos and social media posts. Original art files are available free upon request.

Intervention Materials

All materials needed for the implementation of the program are available online at no cost.

- Monthly Nutrition Educator Lessons: <https://idph.iowa.gov/inn/pick-a-better-snack/educator>
- Bingo Cards: <https://idph.iowa.gov/inn/pick-a-better-snack/bingo>
- Family Newsletters: <https://idph.iowa.gov/inn/pick-a-better-snack/newsletters>
- Fruit and Veggie Fact Sheets: <https://idph.iowa.gov/inn/pick-a-better-snack/fact-sheets>
- Coloring Pages: <https://idph.iowa.gov/inn/pick-a-better-snack/coloring>

Intervention Costs

Materials are available at no cost.

Evidence Summary

An evaluation of the Pick a **better** snackTM program called Wave II was funded by USDA in 2011-2012. The full report can be found at <https://idph.iowa.gov/inn/school-grants/educator-resources>. The study was published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: [https://jandonline.org/article/S2212-2672\(15\)01814-6/fulltext](https://jandonline.org/article/S2212-2672(15)01814-6/fulltext).? In summary, the results showed a statistically significant increase in children's daily at-home consumption of fruits and vegetables (FVs) combined (as reported by parents of third grade students) for two intervention groups when compared to the control group. When compared with the control group, the “Direct Education plus Social Marketing” (i.e. BASICS Plus) intervention group increased consumption of FVs by 0.31 cups ($p < 0.01$). The “Direct Education Only” (i.e., BASICS) intervention group increased FVs consumption by 0.24 cups ($p < 0.05$). When looking at fruits and vegetables separately, both programs demonstrated significant impacts on at-home fruit consumption, however when comparing both interventions with the control group only BASICS Plus had an impact on at-home vegetable consumption. **Classification:** Research-tested

Evaluation Indicators

Based on the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework, the following outcome indicators can be used to evaluate intervention progress and success.

	Short Term (ST)	Medium Term (MT)	Long Term (LT)	Population Results (R)
Individual	ST1 , ST3	MT1 , MT3		
Environmental Settings				
Sectors of Influence		MT12		

Evaluation Materials

Please contact Suzy Wilson at the Iowa Department of Public Health with any requests for evaluation materials.

Success Story

Iowa Nutrition Network School Grant Program:

<https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/success-stories/iowa-nutrition-network-school-grant-program>

Additional Information

Website: The Pick a **better** snack TM website (<https://idph.iowa.gov/inn/pick-a-better-snack>) includes a program overview and materials to implement the program such as lesson plans, bingo cards, family newsletters, coloring pages, and fruit and vegetable fact sheets. **Contact Person:** Suzy Wilson, RDN, LD Iowa Nutrition Network School Grant Coordinator 321 E. 12th St., Des Moines, IA 50319 Phone: (515) 322-6413 Email: Suzy.wilson@idph.iowa.gov